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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Thursday, December 29, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Fake Medicines." Information from the Food and Drug Administration, U.S.D.A.

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Here's a true story told me the other day by an official of the Food and Drug Administration. All of us who buy medicine for ourselves or our families and are interested in buying reliable remedies--those that are really helpful for what ails us, will be interested in this story.

Up in New England, a man who had been a butcher, decided that he could make money if he went into the fake-medicine manufacturing business. So he set up shop, making and selling his first product--corn salve. Then he increased his line. Pretty soon he was selling cough sirup, rheumatic tablets, female tonic, lung tonic, la grippe capsules, kidney tonic, nerve sirup and another remedy called "antiseptic roots." Quite an extensive business for a man without medical training, don't you think? And these different fake-medicines were labeled with curative claims for a wide variety of diseases.

At first this manufacturer did business only in his immediate locality. He employed no sales agents and did very little advertising. But after awhile his business grew and he shipped some of his nostrums across a State line. That was an unlucky day for him and a lucky day for the misguided people who might have gone on spending their money for his worthless goods. You see, as soon as his products went across a State line, they were subject to seizure by the Federal authorities. The manufacturer was liable to prosecution for violation of the Federal food and drugs act. On the second of November, the Federal Court for the District of New Hampshire fined this former butcher $425 for labeling his preparations with false and fraudulent claims as to their ability to cure or prevent disease.

Dr. Cullen of the Food and Drug Administration says that small-scale medical fakers almost always do their business in their own locality or at least in their own State. Many States now have laws that regulate the intrastate sale of fake medicines. The Federal food and drugs act can take care of such products only when they are shipped across State borders or when they are imported or exported.

Both these state laws and Federal laws help protect us buyers. But remember that at present these laws can only dictate what goes on the label. They don't control the advertising. Many of the worthless medicines offered for sale are honestly and truthfully labeled according to law, but may be flagrantly advertised. If you want to be sure about the medicines you buy, depend on the label, not on hearsay or exaggerated advertising.

Speaking of fake remedies, did you know that even in this enlightened country of ours quacks selling so-called cancer "cures" are still about?

"Such is the case", says Dr. Cullen, "yet no scientific or medical evidence shows that any drug or combination of drugs will cure cancer."

If you have any friends who are relying on or even considering taking medical nostrums for this serious disease, here is something to tell them. Dr. Cullen says, "When taken in the early stages, cancer may be cured by surgical treatment or by use of radium. But the Food and Drug Administration is convinced that the sale of so-called cancer "cures" results not only in loss of money to the buyer, but--what is far more serious--may give the purchaser a false sense of security at a time when immediate action must be taken if the disease is to be cured. In 26 years of regulatory action under the food and drugs act, Federal officers have instituted more than seventy court actions against dozens of so-called cancer cures. When such fakes enter interstate commerce, the Government takes immediate action to remove them from the market".

What do such cancer remedies contain? Well, one of them seized recently by the Government was a liniment made mostly of water, turpentine, ammonia, and egg. The preparation, put up by manufacturers in Boston, Massachusetts, was labeled as a cure for cancer and other virulent diseases. As this liniment was falsely labeled, it was seized when found in interstate commerce.

If you are to spend your money wisely for medicines be sure to read the label on the preparation or in the literature that goes with it. Some medical preparations which never mention being cures for diseases on the label still advertise by the radio or in the press as being definitely helpful for different diseases. Remember that Federal food and drug officials have no authority to regulate outside advertising. They can only protect buyers by insisting that every word on the label be true. For safety take thought before you go shopping. Better compare the statements on the medicine itself with statements of advertisers.

Tomorrow: "Supper for New Years' Eve."